



Become a CNA for Free at Clearview

By Dorothy Bliskey

If you're thinking of becoming a certified nursing assistant, Clearview in Juneau is offering an incentive program to help make it a reality. The fee for the five-week CNA training class, which is normally \$350, is now waived for anyone who signs an agreement to work at Clearview for one year after completion of the training. Likewise, the fee for the required state exam at the end of the course is waived if the potential CNA chooses Clearview as their employer.

The Certified Nursing Assistant class, which begins February 3 and runs through March 5, meets four days per week for five weeks. The course includes classroom instruction, clinical experience, and the state exam. Other dates the class will be offered this year are April 6, June 15, and September 7.

"We can take up to 8 students per class," said Erin Blank, Director of Nursing. "We have an education room where the classroom and lab portions of the class are taught, and then the students go out into the households here at Clearview and work on the clinical portion."

Dina Statz, the Assistant Director of Nursing, teaches the CNA class. She notes that students learn the basics in caring for someone needing assistance with daily activities. "Through the class they learn how to assist them with dressing, bathing, eating, oral care, and personal cares. They also learn about resident safety, infection control and resident rights," Statz said.

At the completion of the class, students take the state exam which assesses their knowledge and hands-on skills. "This testing process happens right at Clearview in our classroom within just days of completing the classroom and clinical portions," Statz said, noting students receive their test results in just a day or two.

Statz, who has taught the CNA class five times in the past, said she has experienced nearly a 100 percent pass rate for students taking the state exam.

Once the students have passed both the skills and knowledge portions of the state test, they are placed on the state registry as a Certified Nursing Assistant.

"I've had a variety of ages in both men and women who enroll in the CNA class," Statz said. "While many are using this class as a stepping stone for nursing school or another health occupation career, others are looking for a new career. Some have just always wanted to be a caregiver."

CNAs can advance to a higher level of pay through working PM or night shifts, through longevity of employment and if continuing on to nursing school.

"We do have many people going to school for nursing," Blank said. "Because of our flexibility in scheduling, they are able to work and go to school," Blank said. "Also, as they progress through nursing school, we have many different avenues that afford them the opportunity for career advancement. We have Nurse

Technician positions, and after they finish their first year of nursing school and successfully pass a Board exam, they can work as an LPN. We have had many employees complete nursing school and get hired here as an RN.”

Blank and Statz agree that CNAs are the eyes and ears of the staff. “CNAs are the ones who get to develop the closest relationships with the residents and families,” Blank said. “You are rewarded every day by the smiles and interactions with the residents here in the facility, knowing that you are assisting in providing someone with the best quality of life that you can.”

Trends show a shortage of CNAs nationwide. In addition, Blank said they were noticing a local trend in an inability to pay for the class. “It seemed difficult for some students to come up with the class fee,” Blank added. “We were looking at ways to bring more CNAs to Clearview.”

Clearview employs approximately 170 CNAs who are a part of the 330 staff members employed there. The main campus has a capacity of 236 residents, with an additional 28 in assisted living units.

“We are very lucky to have the CNAs that we do,” Blank said, “But, at times, Clearview also feels the pressure of what is going on nationwide with staffing shortages.”

“Our incentive gives a person the chance to go through our CNA class for free, and also ensures a job once they complete the course. It’s a win-win for them and for us here at Clearview.” >>

Deadline to apply for the class is January 20. To apply or to learn more, go to www.co.dodge.wi.gov and click on the Employment tab and Job Opportunities. Clearview is operated by Dodge County and overseen by the State of Wisconsin. It operates under an intergovernmental cooperation agreement under which member counties contribute to the costs of operation.

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